

Strategic program helps families counter depression and anxiety

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A new program aimed at reducing the impact of parents' anxiety or depression on the family is being trialled in Australia.

The Let's Talk about Children program is being offered to parents by researchers at the Krongold Centre at Monash University.

The program, developed by Professor Tytti Solantaus from the National Institute for Health and Welfare in Finland, provides parents with two or three sessions during which they can develop skills to help them support

their families within the context of their [anxiety](#) or [depression](#).

Psychologist Associate Professor Andrea Reupert said [anxiety and depression](#) were prevalent in the community, and it was important for parents to better understand the conditions and develop ways to deal with them.

"Each year, 14.4 per cent of adult Australians experience an anxiety disorder and 6.2 per cent experience a depressive disorder. It is estimated that over half a million of these adults are parents with a million [children](#) in their care," Associate Professor Reupert said.

"All parents find looking after children challenging from time to time. Many parents who have depression or anxiety may have questions or concerns about their children and may worry about how their [mental health](#) is impacting on them."

Evidence shows that without intervention, these children have two or three times more risk than their peers of developing a mental health issue themselves. This underlines the importance of preventing the transmission of anxiety and depression from parents to children.

Associate Professor Reupert said several studies had shown Let's Talk about Children benefited parents and their children.

"The program has been found to increase parental understanding, and reduce feelings of guilt and shame. In children there were significant reductions in emotional symptoms and improved pro-social behaviour," Associate Professor Reupert said.

"Let's Talk about Children is not an assessment of parenting, but instead focuses on supporting the parent."

The sessions will be held at the Krongold Centre at the University's Clayton campus. Parents with anxiety or depression can attend free of charge, and will be able to discuss with a clinician how their anxiety or depression might be impacting on their family and what they can do about it.

"We are hoping that [parents](#) will become more confident to support their children, in the context of their mental health difficulties, and will acquire some useful strategies to help them," Associate Professor Reupert said.

Provided by Monash University

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